



RASI - IFRAO NEWS

Eighteenth Congress of Rock Art Society of India, Bhopal 2013: A Brief Report

Eighteenth Congress of the Rock Art Society of India was hosted by Dr V. S. Wakankar Archaeological Research Institute, Department of Culture, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal from 6 to 8 December 2013. The venue of the Congress was the Auditorium of the State Archaeological Museum, Shamla Hills, Bhopal.

The Congress was attended by nearly 50 participants from different parts of India i.e. from Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Odisha. Besides, there were delegates from France, New Zealand, Netherland and South Korea.

In addition to the inaugural function on 6th December and valedictory function on 8th December, there were 7 academic sessions in which 30 research papers were presented in three days. These covered different aspects of rock art research, theory and methodology, conservation and management, awareness programmes for rock art heritage, rock art and mythology, etc. The academic sessions were chaired by Prof Sheila Mishra, Prof. Giriraj Kumar, Prof Mahesh P. Srivastava, Prof. D. P. Tewari and Dr. Meenakshi Dubey Pathak.

The inaugural function of the RASI Congress was started at 10:30 am on 6th December by lighting the lamp and then offering flowers to the image of Dr V. S. Wakankar. Prof C. D. Singh, former Vice Chancellor, Central Tribal University, Amarkantak was the chief Guest of the Congress. Shri P. B. S. Sengar, Director of the Institute and host of the Congress, welcomed the delegates and highlighted the programmes to be undertaken by Dr V.S. Wakankar Archaeological Research Institute. Prof R. C. Agrawal, President RASI welcomed the delegates on behalf of RASI and extended his heartfelt thanks for inviting RASI to hold its Congress in the Institute, at Bhopal. He emphasised on the scientific research, especially absolute dating of rock art to be undertaken on priority basis. Prof Giriraj Kumar, Secretary General, RASI presented the progress report, plan and strategies of RASI in the forthcoming years. He also pointed out that RASI and its international journal *Purakala* were established in 1990 to fulfil the last wishes of Dr Wakankar. Both of them are playing crucial role in disseminating the rock art research and the heritage in the home and overseas countries as well. These have also provided a global forum for Indian rock art scholars. Shri S. B. Ota, Director IGRMS, Bhopal and Vice president RASI also



Fig.1: Dignitaries on the dais during Inaugural Function of the 18th RASI Congress



Fig.2: View of participants of Inaugural function of RASI Congress, Bhopal



Fig. 3: Inauguration of the Congress by lighting of Lamp ceremony

welcomed the delegates. Prof C.D. Singh in his address highlighted the significance of rock art heritage and emphasised the urgent need for its protection. Serious efforts are required in this direction. *Purakala* Vol. 23, 2013 was released on the occasion by the Chief Guest. Vote of thanks was given by Dr. Jinendra Jain of the Institute.

The prestigious 18th Dr V.S. Wakankar memorial lecture was delivered by the renowned rock art scholar and UNESCO representative from France, Dr Jean Clottes. He emphasised the need for bringing more and more rock art sites in the UNESCO World Heritage list as it gives the site world wide publicity immediately. Chaturbhujnath nala and Daraki-



Fig.4: Shri P.B.S. Sengar, Director, Dr.V.S.Wakankar Archaeological Research Institute, Bhopal delivering welcome address.



Fig.5: Release of *Purakala* Volume 23 by the Guests and others.

Chattan in Chambal valley and rock art and natural heritage of Pachmarhi can be the potential candidates from India.

The Keynote Address of the Congress was delivered by Dr Yann Pierre Montelle from New Zealand. He discussed how to deal with the intangible aspects of rock art in the context of skull chamber in Chauvet Cave, France. It is a very difficult aspect of rock art research.

On 7th December, the Congress delegates were taken to Bhimbetka, the World heritage site to make them familiar with the nature and kind of rock art heritage of Bhimbetka which has become the synonym of rock art of India. The delegates also studied the



Fig.6: Shri S. B. Ota, Director IGRMS, Bhopal, Regional Director (Central Region), ASI and Vice-President, RASI addressing the audience



Fig.7: Chief Guest of the function, Prof C.D. Singh addressing participants of inaugural function



Fig.10: Mrs Pushpa Tiwari, wife of late Prof.Shankar Tiwari addressing valedictory function after her felicitation by RASI



Fig.8: Prof. Jean Clottes , UNESCO representative from France delivering 18th Dr. V.S. Wakankar Memorial lecture

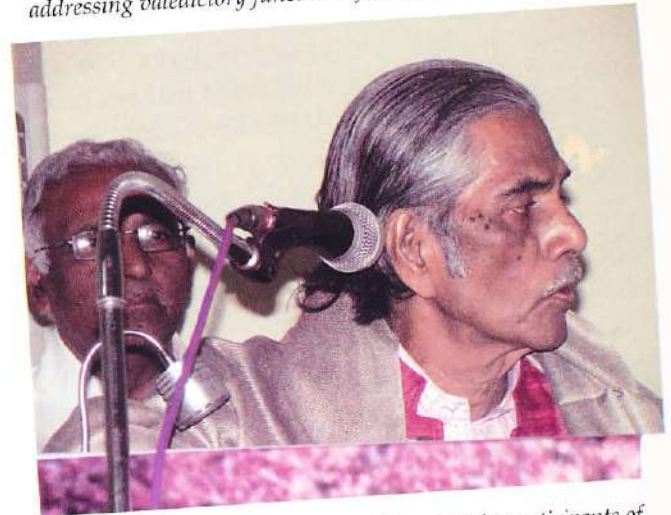


Fig.11: Shri Sachida Nagdev addressing the participants of valedictory function after his felicitation by RASI



Fig.9: Dr Yann Pierre Montelle from Newzealand delivering Keynote Address of the 18th RASI Congress



Fig. 12: Dr. Narayan Vyas addressing the gathering after his felicitation by RASI. Dr. O. P. Mishra in the background

management aspects of Bhimbetka which was a new experience to them. Dr N. Taher, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI, Bhopal Circle and the Custodian of Bhimbetka kindly made the nice arrangements for explaining everything about the site to the delegates.

After the Bhimbetka visit academic sessions were held. In the evening the meetings of RASI Executive Committee and General Body were held at 6:00 pm. They were presided over by Dr R. C. Agrawal, President RASI. Dr Giriraj Kumar, General Secretary RASI informed the RASI members and the delegates that next year RASI will be celebrating silver jubilee of its establishment. Be prepared and give your kind suggestions for that. In the response a suggestion came to bring out a special issue of *Purakala*. Development of website of Rock Art Society of India was also suggested. Prof Kumar also informed that efforts are being made that the next RASI Congress-2014 should be organised in the University of Pondichery. The second choice is Utkal University, Bhubneswar. The General Body also expressed its gratitude to shri P. B. S. Sengar, Director of Dr V. S. Wakankar Archaeological Research Institute, Bhopal for hosting the 18th RASI Congress and making nice arrangements for staying at Guest Houses of the National Institute of Technical Teachers Training & Research (NITTTR), food and visit of Bhimbetka for the delegates.

On 8th December, besides the regular academic sessions, a special session was devoted for the Congress theme to involve the young ones in rock art research. It was chaired by Dr Giriraj Kumar. In this session, Dr Shiva Kumar Challa, Dr T. Murugeshi, Dr N. Chandramouli, Dr S. Pradhan, Dr Meenakshi Dubey Pathak, Dr Yann P Montelle, Dr Bert Shaap, Jean Clottes, Ram Krishna and Dr Giriraj Kumar gave

their inputs and shared their views from their own experiences. The discussion emphasised following measures.

1. Rock art heritage awareness groups should be established throughout India. RASI with its India wide network should take initiative.
2. There is an urgent need that RASI and its Journal *Purakala* should be made online.
3. RASI in collaboration with the similar organisations should organise workshops and training programmes in this direction for young and new ones in the field of Rock Art Science.
4. RASI should take initiative to develop a system and facilitate working of young scholars in the direction and guidance of senior scholars in this field.

Valedictory function of the Congress was started at 3:00 pm on 8th Dec, 2013. Dr Pankaj Rag, Principal Secretary and Commissioner, Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh kindly graced the function. Shri P. B. S. Sengar invited RASI to organise workshops and training programme at the Institute and all necessary facilities will be provided by the Institute. Mrs Pushpa Tiwari, wife of late Prof Shankar Tiwari, Shri Sachida Nagdev and Dr. Narayan Vyas were felicitated by the President RASI for their contributions in rock art research and specially their association with Dr. V.S. Wakankar and Prof. Shankar Tiwari. The Valedictory function was anchored by Dr. O. P. Mishra. The function ended with a sincere vote of thanks both by RASI and the Institute.

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